

Message Text

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SUBJ: ARAFAT INTERVIEW IN ITALIAN DAILY

SUMMARY. PAESE SERA, LEFTIST ROMAN DAILY, PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 14 A RECENT INTERVIEW WITH YASSER ARAFAT IN BEIRUT, LARGELY REPEATING STANDARD PLO LINE. FOLLOWING MAIN POINTS ARE DIRECT ARAFAT QUOTES (INFORMAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION) ACCORDING TO THE PAPER. END SUMMARY.

1. "PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST CANNOT BE DIVORCED FROM THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. IN THE PAST MANY HAVE TRIED TO DIVIDE THE PEOPLES OF THE ARAB NATION BUT WITHOUT SUCCEEDING."

2. IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION ON THE GENEVA ME CONFERENCE, "FIRST OF ALL, THE CONFERENCE SHOULD BE RECONVENED. THEN THE PARTIES SHOULD BE IN AGREEMENT TO INVITE THE PLO. FINALLY, THE OBJECTIVES FOR WHICH THE GENEVA CONFERENCE SHOULD BE CONVENED MUST BE CLEAR. WERE IT TO SERVE AS A COVER FOR RECOGNITION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL WITHOUT TAKING INTO

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ACCOUNT THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, THERE IS NO

REASON FOR THE PLO TO BE PRESENT." "OUR CONVICTION IS THAT WE MUST BE PRESENT WHEREVER THE DESTINY OF OUR PEOPLE MAY BE DECIDED..." "THE PLO WILL TAKE ITS DECISIONS IN DUE COURSE AND IN A COLLEGIAL FASHION AS IS THE DEMOCRATIC TRADITION OF THE PALESTINE RESISTANCE ORGANIZATION."

3. ISRAELI FONMIN ALLON HAD EARLIER TOLD PAESE SERA THAT ISRAEL WOULD "NEVER" DEAL WITH THE PLO. ARAFAT'S REACTION: "EVERYONE SHOULD RECOGNIZE REALITY, AND THE HEBREW STATE ("LO STATO EBRAICO") SHOULD, FIRST, OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZE THE RIGHTS OF THE NATIONAL PALESTINIAN ENTITY, THEN OUR ORGANIZATION AS THE ONLY LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THOSE RIGHTS."

4. "AT THE NATIONAL CONGRESS IN CAIRO WE HAVE ADOPTED A POLITICAL PROGRAM WITH TEN POINTS. IT AFFIRMS THAT THE FINAL OBJECTIVE OF THE PLO IS TO ARRIVE AT THE CREATION OF A LAY, DEMOCRATIC STATE IN PALESTINE IN WHICH JEWS, MOSLEMS AND CHRISTIANS COULD CO-EXIST WITH RESPECT FOR THEIR FAITHS AND THEIR POLITICAL POSITIONS. WE ALSO AFFIRMED, HOWEVER, THAT IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE THE PLO HAS THE RIGHT TO ESTABLISH A PALESTINIAN ENTITY IN EACH PART OF THE TERRITORY LIBERATED FROM ZIONIST OCCUPATION. THIS IS OUR PROGRAM... AND IT REMAINS INTACT AND VALID IN EACH OF ITS POINTS."

5. ASKED IF THE PLO'S TWO-STAGE PROGRAM DOESN'T PRESUPPOSE IMPLICIT RECOGNITION OF THE EXISTENCE OF TWO STATES IN PALESTINE, AND THE NEED FOR RECIPROCAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THEM, ARAFAT SAID "FIRST, EVEN THE PARTIAL OBJECTIVE REMAINS YET TO BE REALIZED. IN THE SECOND PLACE, THERE ARE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE EXISTENCE OF TWO STATES AND THE EXISTENCE BETWEEN THEM OF NORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, IF THAT IS WHAT YOUR QUESTION MEANS. ISRAEL STILL HAS NO RELATIONS WITH ANY OF THE ARAB STATES."

6. ON A GOVERNMENT IN EXILE: ARAFAT SAID ONE "COULD ONLY GROW OUT OF OUR DECISION; THAT IS OUR DUTY AND OURS ALONE. IT CANNOT BE THE RESULT OF PRESSURES FROM OTHER POWERS OR ARAB STATES. IF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST MAKES IT NECESSARY, WE WILL TAKE THIS DECISION
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COLLEGIALLY AND THE GOVERNMENT SO COMPOSED WOULD BE THE DIRECT EXPRESSION OF THE PLO. BUT FOR THE MOMENT SUCH A DECISION IS PREMATURE. MUCH HAS YET TO BE SEEN AND WE ARE FOLLOWING THESE THINGS CLOSELY."

7. "THE PLO'S POLICY IS AGAINST ACTS OF TERRORISM OUTSIDE OF PALESTINIAN TERRITORY. OUR FIGHT CONTINUES AGAINST THE ENEMY IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES."VOLPE

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